

**OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES TRADE REPRESENTATIVE
EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
WASHINGTON, D.C.
20508**

USTR PRESS RELEASES ARE AVAILABLE ON THE USTR HOME PAGE AT WWW.USTR.GOV.
THEY ARE ALSO AVAILABLE THROUGH THE USTR FAX RETRIEVAL SYSTEM AT 202-395-4809.

**BELJING, CHINA
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
MARCH 30, 1999**

**CONTACT: JAY ZIEGLER
(202-395-3230)**

**STATEMENT OF AMBASSADOR CHARLENE BARSHEFSKY CONCERNING THE
STATUS OF NEGOTIATIONS ON CHINA'S WTO ACCESSION**

I first want to acknowledge the extraordinary dedication and perseverance of our negotiating teams led by Assistant United States Trade Representative Robert Cassidy and Vice Minister of Trade Long Yongru. When I was here last, I left my team to continue its work. They have since participated in multilateral talks in Geneva and returned to Beijing about a week ago.

As you know, a few weeks ago I indicated that I would return to Beijing if my involvement in negotiations here would facilitate progress. It was on that basis at the request of the Chinese Government that I flew to Beijing yesterday, and I have just concluded constructive meetings with State Council member Wu Yi and Premier Zhu Ronji on the issue of China's WTO accession.

I am pleased to report that we have made some important progress today in narrowing the issues before us. Substantial gaps remain, however, in critical areas of trade, and there are complex issues in front of us. As a result of our discussions today, China and the United States have agreed to further discussions. These discussions will occur at the expert level, led by Robert Cassidy on our side, and Vice Minister Long for the Chinese. The United States will set no artificial deadlines in these negotiations; progress will only be driven by substance.

Our commitment to these negotiations and the tireless work of our team demonstrate that the United States supports China's membership in the WTO. But China's accession must be on the basis of a broad, commercially-meaningful package that opens China's markets to our goods, services and agricultural providers. This requires enforceable market-access commitments, transparency, non-discriminatory regulatory systems, and effective national treatment at the border and within China's economy. Of course, this also requires addressing our bilateral trade concerns. And finally, it will also require agreement on all WTO rules.

I want to applaud the seriousness of purpose with which the Government of China has approached these negotiations. China has evidenced substantial understanding of the level of reforms necessary for it to join the WTO. We believe that the reforms that we are outlining in

these negotiations will complement China's domestic economic reforms and promote more substantial growth in the future. For the rest of the world, these negotiations are important in bringing China into the international trading community with all of the responsibilities which that membership conveys.